

IMAC Training and Technical Assistance Subcommittee February 17, 2004

Attendees:

Jenny Hoffman, Deb Solis, Theresa Fosbinder, Susan Rusbolt, Russell Yancy, Nikki Moriarty, Judy Johnson, Julie Loebel, Tricia Bless, Margaret Romens, Dave Hippler, Jeff Brikowski, Keli Poppe and Vicki Jessup

1. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Minutes from the 1/20/04 meeting were approved without modification.
- Per IMAC request, there is an agenda item labeled “Training Update” for the February IMAC meeting. Amy Mendel-Clemens will provide an update on current training initiatives (FS Reduced Reporting Phase 2A, BadgerCare verification changes). As previously scheduled, at the March IMAC meeting Theresa will provide an official report of the subcommittee workgroup progress to date.
- CARES worker web- this was originally scheduled for implementation in September 2004. The implementation date has now been postponed to 11/29/04 due to hardware/software technical issues. In addition, this initiative will be piloted in a few counties or with a few users prior to statewide implementation. This committee should start thinking about how to provide training.

2. ISSUE PAPER TO IMAC (ALSO SEE ATTACHMENT 1)

A. Mandatory/optional training

The group feels that this is a key issue that needs to be addressed, and some direction articulated in order to succeed with distance learning.

What are the qualities a training topic should have in order to be considered mandatory? Margaret asked whether “mandatory” training counts toward the 12-hours of annually required professional development? Currently only six of the required hours can come from mandatory training.

Mandatory means “the appropriate workers must complete the training course successfully”. Suggestion was to add “successfully” as a footnote. For now, successfully means complete, later it could mean a certain level of proficiency. Although currently “appropriate worker type” is moving target, we will start collecting more information about specific programs that workers deal with using Pathlore.

The group recommends that training should be considered “mandatory” whenever there is:

- New policy initiative that is tied to an Ops Memo

- New process or automation change
- Major CARES system change
- There is potential impact on FS/Medicaid error rate

Advantages of deeming training mandatory

- It is then established as a workload priority.
- It may increase buy-in. Workers are required to use distance learning if training is mandatory and distance is the only way the training is offered.

Issues related to “mandatory” designation:

- With funding cuts, the state is hesitant to mandate training topics. However, training costs are reduced now with distance learning options- less time and elimination of travel costs versus face-to-face training. Availability and flexibility have also increased; you no longer have to wait for the training to be offered in your area or for a spot to open.
- There currently aren’t any consequences if mandatory training is not completed. What is the state’s contractual ability to implement? Could corrective action plans be used to support?
- Negative connotations with word “mandatory”. Suggestion to use “required” but this could be confused with contractually required training. Thesaurus offers “compulsory” and “obligatory” as alternatives to mandatory but these were rejected.

B. Training ties to the FS and Medicaid error rates

It is important to consider the impacts of training on both the Food Stamp AND Medicaid error rates. The goal is not only to minimize incorrect payments, but also to reduce the number of incorrect denials and terminations.

The group decided that this is an important consideration in all of the work that we do and the training programs that we implement, but that it is not a separate enough topic to include in an issue paper. We need to continually consider it as a part of other issues we raise (for example mandatory/optional training and buy in for the distance learning approach).

C. Management and worker buy in for the distance learning approach

Challenges to buy-in:

- Workers may not be comfortable with technology, and there is a lack of knowledge/fear of the distance learning “unknowns”,
- Past technical difficulties,
- Competing priorities,
- Environmental/workload, scheduling, planning and logistical issues (have to allow protected training time- allow workers to block off time and shut off ringer on phone),

- Constraints- training opportunities have to be time-limited or could exacerbate the error rate,
- Distance training may not be perceived as “real,”
- Possible perception that responsibility for training has been shifted from state to local agencies,
- Training was designed for individual participation- hadn’t anticipated or planned for group training models. There are system limitations with group training for reporting and tracking- can’t track how long the training took, how staff scored, that all components were completed, etc.

Possible methods for increasing buy-in:

- Increased communication via regional meetings,
- Provide support for training- PAC team, regional training, local agency training liaison staff,
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis- traditional versus distance training. Then emphasize the benefits of distance learning- less time, travel costs,
- Foster the idea that distance training is a valid learning method.
- Identify strategies for scheduling and logistical issues (e.g. find a quiet place like an interview room that staff can use for distance training).
- Monthly list of new training initiatives.
- Incorporate in upcoming Administrator memo and/or Administrative Rules related to IM training and professional development. DHFS needs to change the IM training requirements from DWD Rule to DHFS Rule. During this process, DHFS is revisiting the requirements rather than just replicating DWD rules.

D. Responsibility for basic PC/internet competency

The state is not responsible for ensuring staff persons have basic PC and Internet competency- agencies need to set a minimum requirement. We should look at 2005 contractual language. The group decided not to raise this as an issue or concern to IMAC as it is likely to be raised in conjunction with contractual and IT discussions.

3. PATHLORE PROFILES AND REPORTS

We are expanding the Pathlore student profiles. This will lead to better data on the profiles, as well as increased reporting capability. For example, instead of just W-2 or not, we will now be asking about specific program affiliation, job functions and additional duties (ATL, CARES coordinator), etc.

Changes to the class and worker profiles will result in changes to transcripts, class identification codes and report views. Another example of a specific changes- in past only asked for one ATL contact name. Now, there is flexibility to identify an ATL who is not the person’s supervisor. We will also be collecting more information about the agency structure and individual so that profiles can be automated, rather than collected/tracked “manually”. We could also do analysis... for example, look for common elements between everyone who didn’t pass the course. The goal is to identify “worker characteristics” that can be correlated to incidence of error and effectiveness of training approach/materials. Also being considered is capacity for workers to be able to make their own updates/changes to their profile.

4. WISLINE WEB DEMO

For the WisLine web event for trainers regarding Transitional Food Stamp and Reduced Change Reporting Phase 2a training, there are 26 individuals enrolled in the first session and 17 in the other (as of today). There are 50 seats available in each class. The recommendation to include only one person per agency was to assure all agencies have an opportunity for participation.

The demo was intended to give subcommittee members a sense of the features available through WisLine Web. Some of the available features include:

- Can be used for informal meetings (virtual conference table) or formal coursework (virtual classroom).
- All participants can see the names of other participants and view materials (slides, PowerPoint, Word/Excel documents, etc.)
- Participants can “chat” with any of the other participants and/or instructor.
- Participants can be assigned to small groups.
- Participants can pose a question for the instructor at any time.
- Students can provide feedback about the course pace (e.g. speed up, slow down, need help) since the instructor can’t see if people are nodding off or looking confused.
- The instructor can allow participants to moderate the discussion or write on the “board”.
- The instructor can monitor participation (who has joined/left the discussion).
- The instructor can create a poll/survey for participants.

Cost is \$12 per line per hour, but more than one staff can participate via that line. For now the state is assuming all of these costs, but there may be consideration in the future for sharing these costs with local agencies. For example, state would pay for one line, but if agency wants additional lines, those would be at the agency’s cost. Feedback from the group was very positive... Russell said it was “bomb diggitty”!

For additional information about the costs and features of WisLine Web, use the following link:

<http://www.uwex.edu/ics/wisline/>

5. NEW WORKER UPDATE

With the exception of Milwaukee, the state had only planned to do one new worker training session per quarter- rotating between Mosinee and Oshkosh. However, there were more new workers hired than expected so now 3 classes have been scheduled this quarter- Mosinee (2/24), Oshkosh (3/10) and Eau Claire (3/2). There will continue to be considerations for worker location.

WHEN SHOULD IM TRAINING BE MANDATORY?	
IM Training should be Mandatory if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Initiative (policy) • Tied to Ops-Memo • New Process/Automation change 	“Mandatory” means: “Appropriate workers” must *successfully complete the training course. *Successfully to be defined: Now=Completed Future=Proficient
We should have mandatory training because... (Why should we do this) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractual ability implement • Could corrective action plans effect this • PTS Distance Learning Center • Less time/Less expense w/Distance training (is available 24/7 and flexible) • Work load reduction • Available resources to support Distance Learning (i.e. PAC team, Regional Trainers & ATL support) 	If we don’t.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error Rates may rise • Increase in worker dissatisfaction • Increase in worker turnover

MANAGEMENT/WORKER BUY-IN FOR DISTANCE LEARNING	
What can the state do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication-Regional sups meetings & Directors meetings • Prepare cost/benefit analysis to compare traditional to distance training’s to give validity • Let them know there is support for distance learning outside of the agency • Help with how to establish distance learning climate What can the agencies do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give “protected” training time (M,S) • Help schedule & follow up (S) • Set up protected places (M,S) • Review internal process to see how they work with Distance model. What does protected time mean, communication with clerical staff, use of staff meetings (M, S) M=Management level S= Supervisory level	Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Knowledge • Fear • Technical Difficulties • Workload issues • Environmental issues • Scheduling/timing • Logistical planning/support • Different way of training